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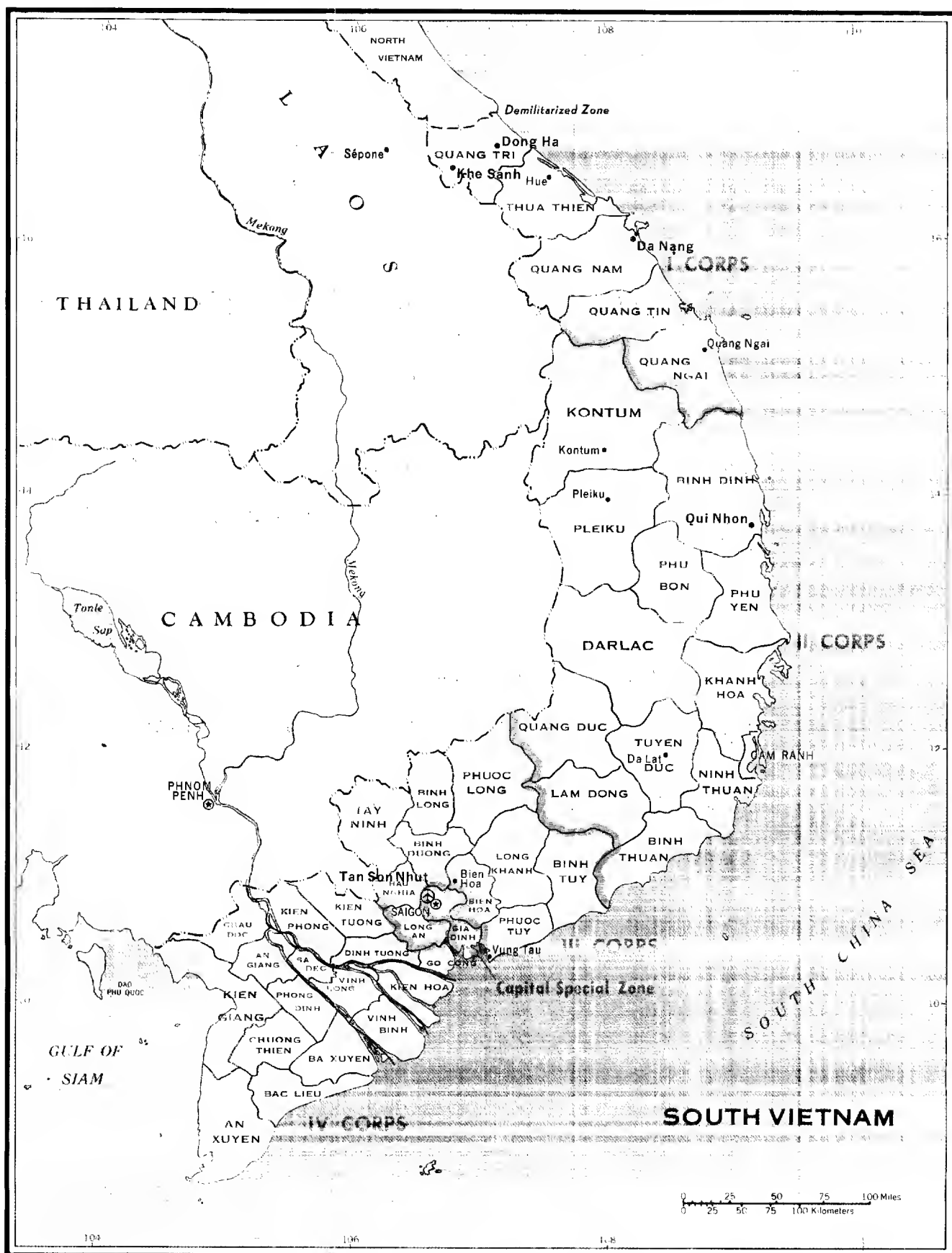
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*South Vietnam: Renewed allied offensives in several sections of South Vietnam have resulted in sharp clashes with the enemy.

Small-scale engagements fought during the past two days near Dong Ha, Qui Nhon and Tan Son Nhut caused moderate to heavy casualties on both sides. Major actions by enemy forces were confined to a rocket attack on several sections of the Da Nang military complex. Reports from Khe Sanh indicate that the Communists are continuing to tunnel and test perimeter defenses under cover of periodic artillery fire.

Since the Tet attack on Saigon, there have been growing accusations by the Vietnamese press and by police against the local Chinese community for aiding the Viet Cong or remaining passive and for not contributing sufficient funds to the recovery effort. There may be some basis in fact for such charges, but the Chinese believe that they are being made scapegoats and that long-term Vietnamese prejudice and police corruption in their sector were partly responsible for the enemy's entrenchment there.

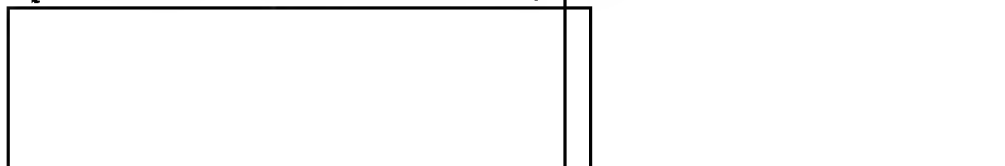
These mutual recriminations, although not presently of major proportions, almost certainly play into Communist hands, as did the suspicions created when the government detained its political critics. Reports of continuing intimidation of government officials and supporters in rural areas provide telling evidence that, in addition to military pressure, the Communists are actively seeking to weaken the government by alienating or neutralizing as much of its popular base as possible.

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*Panama: Government and opposition forces may be heading for violent showdown today if a last-minute compromise in the electoral dispute is not reached.

A special session of the National Assembly is scheduled to convene late this afternoon to hear charges against President Robles for alleged interference in the electoral process and unconstitutional support of presidential candidate Samudio.



President Robles and several of his ministers visited National Guard headquarters yesterday afternoon to insist that Commandant Vallarino prohibit demonstrations by Arias followers and "create conditions for preventing the convening of the National Assembly." The attempt was apparently unsuccessful.

Although efforts to reach a compromise have thus far been unsuccessful, General Vallarino may try to force both sides to arrange a peaceful settlement.

Opposition and pro-Samudio media are making an all-out propaganda effort urging their followers to mass outside the assembly building before the legislature meets. If serious clashes do occur, the Guard might intervene and take over the government.

Large numbers of Arias supporters converging on Panama City from the interior will greatly increase the chances for disorder. Moreover, in the event of a breakdown of public order, the proximity of the assembly building to the Canal Zone border could result in some anti-US incidents.



NOTES

Poland: The Warsaw party organization at a session on 2 March attacked a resolution adopted by the Polish Writers' Union (ZLP) two days earlier condemning regime censorship. The session, attended by other "leading (Polish) Communists," marks the beginning of a major confrontation between the party and intellectuals. Following the ZLP meeting, a smoke bomb was thrown into the staff wash room of the Polish state censor's office. The present unrest was triggered by the regime's closing of a classical anti-Russian play last January that resulted in a student demonstration in downtown Warsaw. [REDACTED]

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West Germany - West Berlin: The Bundestag begins its periodic round of committee meetings in West Berlin today, despite Soviet objections to such sessions. Soviet Ambassador Tsarapkin in a meeting with Chancellor Kiesinger on 1 March expressed concern that the meetings could create "a serious situation." However, both Soviet and East German media have been relatively restrained in commenting on the sessions, and thus far there have been no reports of harassment of Bundestag deputies, who began arriving in West Berlin over the weekend. [REDACTED]

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Japan: Leftist groups protesting the Vietnamese war are stepping up demonstrations to prevent the opening of a US Army field hospital in Tokyo this month. Some 800 students armed with sticks and stones demonstrated on 20 February and 3 March, and plans call for a major demonstration on 8 March by about 5,000 leftists, including the violence-prone students. The Japanese police have had considerable experience in recent months handling larger demonstrations, however, and should be able to contain this one. [REDACTED]

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